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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a new model for teaching nursing homes, which places a strong emphasis on teamwork by combining the resources of a comprehensive retirement community and three universities to train faculty, students, and staff, and to generate research basic to geriatric care. The four organizations involved in the project (Southwestern Ohio Seniors' Services Inc., The University of Cincinnati, Miami University, and Xavier University) are listed and the Multiuniversity/Multidisciplinary model is presented. The rationale for the program is discussed and specific program objectives are outlined. Specific activities of the project are described, including the development of affiliation agreements, faculty development, research team development, and education. Benefits of the program from the perspective of the universities and the nursing home industry are outlined. (JAC)

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MULTIDISCIPLINARY/ MULTIUNIVERSITY

TEACHING NURSING HOME PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

Traditional education does not promote the development of teamwork in the practice setting. Long term care professionals are trained in separate and competing schools, and the opportunity to develop a collegial relationship with other team members is left to chance. This presentation describes a new model for teaching nursing homes which places a strong emphasis on teamwork. A comprehensive retirement community and three universities combine resources to train faculty, students, staff and generate research basic to geriatric care. The model developed calls for faculty development seminars, fellowship programs, town and gown meetings, inter-university lectures, team training, and joint continuing education programs. The significance of the project is farreaching. Faculty and students have the opportunity to learn from their peers, and be exposed to the practical aspects of working with the institutionalized older person. From the perspective of the nursing home industry, this project has the potential to improve the quality of care, to expand educational opportunities, and generate multidisciplinary research. Further, the project could be replicated by other universities and nursing homes.

Teaching hospitals have made a substantial contribution to the advancement of acute care and the development of modern medical education. Today, there are 450 centers of excellence that train health care professionals in the latest techniques of medical technology for some 7,000 community hospitals (Butler, 1981). These powerful university-hospital affiliations have penetrated the entire hospital delivery system and serve as models for quality care.

Until recently, long term care lacked an institutional resource as powerful as the university-affiliated teaching hospital (Butler, 1981). There were only a handful of long term care facilities to serve as paradigms for the 18,000 nursing homes in this country. Consequently, there have been relatively few improvements in geriatric care, and long term care has never been in the mainstream of medical education.

In an attempt to change this situation the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the National Institute on Aging developed teaching nursing home programs. Grants made under these programs are designed to increase the interaction between chronic care institutions and universities. The approach each organization took is different.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's approach places primary focus on the nurse. Grants made under this program are being used to aid in the development of clinical service, education, and research in university-affiliated facilities (Dennis, 1983).

The National Institute on Aging's approach places primary emphasis on research. Awards made under this program support research on health problems, therapies and health maintenance strategies (National Institute on Aging, 1982).

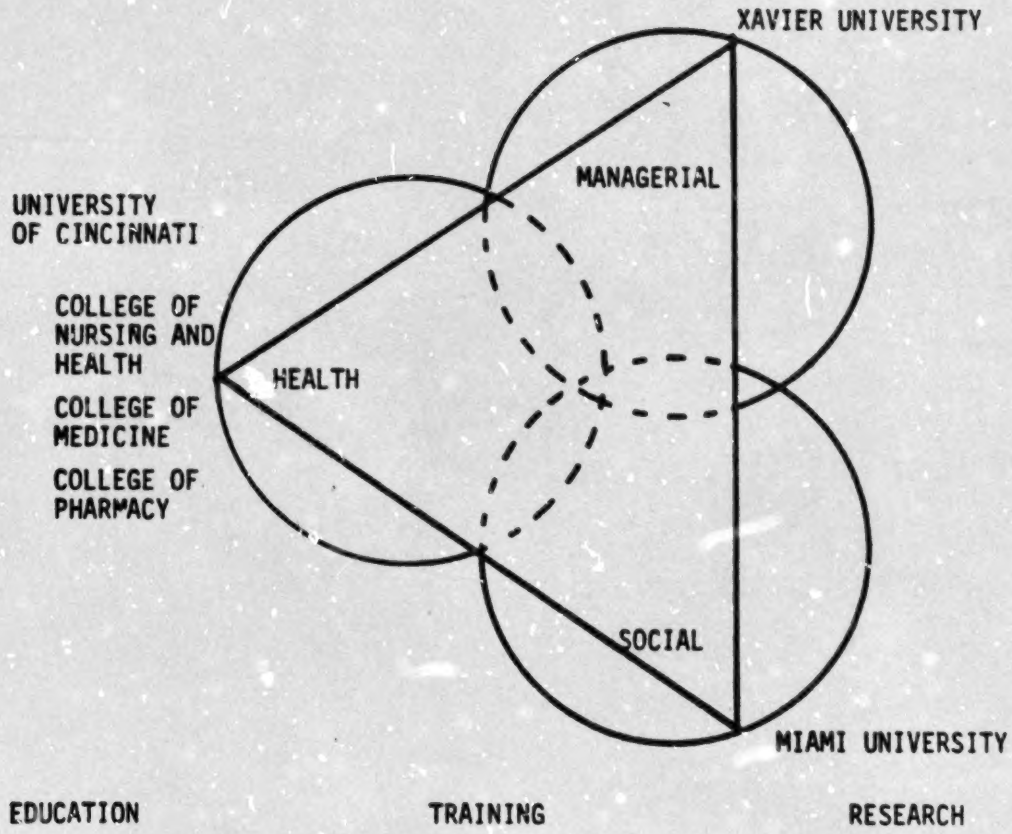
Initiatives like Robert Wood Johnson and the National Institute on Aging demonstrate how planners, policy makers, and long term care administrators are as Dr. Butler suggests, gearing up organizationally in research and training (Butler, 1981). These initiatives also demonstrate that different operational approaches are being used to adapt the teaching hospital model to the nursing home (Aronson,1984; Ciferri and Baker,Forthcoming; Schneider,1983; Weiner and Lichtman, 1982).

This article presents another operational approach. A model for teaching nursing homes which places a strong emphasis on teamwork by combining the resources of a comprehensive retirement community and three universities to train faculty, students, staff and generate research basic to geriatric care.

MULTIUNIVERSITY / MULTIDISCIPLINARY MODEL

Weiner and Lichtman (1982) suggest long term care facilities "develop a consortium or joint venture with a group of local colleges, universities, hospitals and/or other nursing homes within a facility's geographic district". Southwestern Ohio Seniors' Services, Inc., the University of Cincinnati, Miami University and Xavier University did precisely that. All four organizations are within close proximity of each other and each offers a wealth of resources. Southwestern Ohio Seniors' Services, Inc. owns and operates Maple Knoll Village. Maple Knoll Village is a comprehensive philanthropic retirement center with an extensive network of social and health services. The University of Cincinnati has medical, nursing, and pharmaceutical services. Xavier University has an excellent health care administration program. Miami University Scripps Foundation is one of the premier gerontology centers in the United States. Figure 1 presents the Multiuniversity/Multidisciplinary model.

Figure 1. Multiuniversity / Multidisciplinary Model



The rationale for taking this step is grounded in the nature of geriatric care. Geriatric care is multidisciplinary care. It is not discipline centered; it is problem centered. The long term care resident has multiple chronic conditions which share a symbiotic relationship with other psychological, social, and economic impairments (Hendrickson, 1981). In order to care for the older person, nurses have to draw on the expertise of a multidisciplinary team of physicians, pharmacists, social workers, dietitians, and therapists. Thus, it is team care that ultimately determines the quality of resident care in nursing homes.

This rationale is supported in recent national speeches and publications. Dr. Leslie Libow, the 1981 Kent Memorial Lecturer, pointed out to the Gerontological Society of America that a multidisciplinary team is not a group of professionals of various disciplines who sit in a room periodically; it is the "instrument of patient care, the instrument of geriatrics". Similarly, Butler (1981) describes the most complete form of a teaching nursing home as a nursing home which has multiple affiliations.

Drs. Libow and Butler are convinced that the ideal teaching nursing home must take a multidisciplinary approach to education, training, and research. Likewise, Nichols'(1981) comparative analysis of three different models of multidisciplinary education in gerontology demonstrates which model would be the most appropriate.

Nichols determines that the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary approach is based on professionals who are: (a) knowledgeable in the field; (b) knowledgeable of the special needs of the older client; and (c) knowledgeable of the strengths and contributions of other professionals. Furthermore, she finds

that a multidisciplinary model that capitalizes on faculty input from a number of different perspectives has the potential of being more successful than any other model examined. It is her conclusion that the best approach to developing a multidisciplinary teaching nursing home is to combine the resources of experts in the fields of medicine, pharmacy, nursing, management, social services, geriatrics and gerontology.

In July 1984 Southwestern Ohio Seniors' Services, Inc., the University of Cincinnati, Miami University, and Xavier University combined their resources to form the Multiuniversity/Multidisciplinary Teaching Nursing Home Project (M & M Project). The objectives of the project are:

a). to improve the quality of care and living for nursing home residents by training professionals using a multidisciplinary approach;

b). to increase opportunities for improving knowledge and skills in the care of the elderly for faculty, staff, and students in Southwest Ohio;

c). to increase opportunities for improving knowledge in the contributions and strengths of other long term care professionals;

d). to expand opportunities for multidisciplinary research in areas of direct care and management of care of the elderly;

e). to document and disseminate information related to developing a multidisciplinary teaching/practice approach to training long term care professionals.

Specific activities designed to meet the objectives of the project are described in the following section. The majority of the activities outlined incorporates a number of ways faculty and long term care administrators can work together to strengthen education and research efforts in long term care (Brubaker, 1982). To date most of the activities described are being developed.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Before discussing the specific activities designed to meet the objectives of the project, consider the total effect of the project on the quality of care of nursing home residents.

The instrument of geriatric care is teamwork. Unfortunately, long term care professionals, like other health care professionals, are trained in separate and often competing schools (Nichols, 1981). In most cases, the opportunity to develop a collegial relationship with other members of the long term care team is left to chance. Traditional training does not promote the development of teamwork in the practice setting.

All the activities related to the M & M Project are designed to help in the development of a multidisciplinary and collegial relationship among faculty, staff, and students. For instance, faculty development seminars will be team taught by representatives from medicine, nursing, management and the behavioral sciences. Similarly, faculty and students will be trained on site as part of a team. The end result will be an improvement in the quality of care of nursing home residents.

The specific activities of the M & M Project are; development of affiliation agreements, faculty development, research team development, and education.

Development of Affiliation Agreements

During the first six months of the project, Maple Knoll Village established a formal working relationship with the University of Cincinnati, Miami University, and Xavier University. Structurally, a representative from each university serves as an are Associate Director of the Project, steering the program from its developmental to operational phase.

Faculty Development

Beginning in the second year of the project,there will be a series of seminars for faculty. These seminars will be taught by nationally recognized experts in geriatrics and gerontology. The project steering committee will determine the specific topics for the seminars. The major thrust of the seminars is to establish a common knowledge base for multidisciplinary faculty.

At the same time, nine faculty fellowships will be awarded to interested faculty from each of the universities affiliated with the project. The fellowships are designed to familiarize the faculty with all the dimensions of care of the elderly in the long term care setting. One fellow from each of the three universities will participate in the fellowship program at one time. This way the stage is structurally set for the fellows to develop a multidisciplinary and inter-collegial relationship.

Research Team Development

Research related to specific mechanisms and conditions affecting particular aspects of health and functioning in later life often require the formation of multidisciplinary teams. Brown bag lunches and "town and gown"

meetings for interested faculty and staff will be scheduled regularly to exchange information and discuss possible joint projects. Hopefully, this effort will result in the development and award of several research projects in the future.

Education

The majority of the above activities deal with training trainers. Once this component is underway, efforts will be initiated to reach students and staff. The plan calls for three different approaches to train students for careers in long term care.

First, Maple Knoll Village will encourage the use of inter-university faculty for class lectures. Southwest Ohio is fortunate in that each university has a wealth of resources to train long term care professionals. Maple Knoll Village proposes to help each university help themself and the long term care field by encouraging faculty to call on their colleagues and practitioners for special lectures in their respective college classrooms and at Maple Knoll Village.

Second, Maple Knoll Village will serve as a training site for student practicums. Maple Knoll already serves as a training site for several universities. This project will train incoming students as a team rather than separately. Student interns from different disciplines will be assigned to teams to develop the skills of working together.

Third, Maple Knoll will develop a joint continuing education program for long term care professionals already in the field. These seminars and workshops will be team taught by experts in aging theory and practice. This blend of theory and practice will give practitioners the best of both worlds. Further, Maple Knoll will serve not only as an educational crossroad for health and social service disciplines, but also for aging theory and practice.

PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

The M & M project is just beginning. Time and program experience will eventually determine whether the model being tested will meet the objective. At this point, the author can only speculate what the benefits of this project will be for universities and the nursing home industry.

From the perspective of universities the benefits could be:

1) Communication: Communication between different universities is practically non-existent at the program level.

2) Trained Faculty: Tenured and tenure track faculty are participating in the faculty development component of the project. Most programs like the M & M Project fail because the participants are funded through grants. This is not the case here. Continuing participation will not depend on grant funds.

3) University Commitment: Faculty participation was intentionally kept at 10 percent. The rationale here is not to buy faculty time for a specified period, inasmuch as this could have been accomplished by hiring the faculty as consultants. The purpose is to assure continuing university commitment after the program is developed.

4) Research: To develop research grants which address areas basic to the effective provision of long term care.

5) A totally new paradigm - The model used for this project is unique in the field of long term care education

From the perspective of the nursing home industry, the benefits could be:

1) Improved quality of care: Education is the single most important factor in determining the quality of care provided by the nursing home.

2) Trained students: Considering the " Domino Theory " or the " Multipler Effect ", large numbers of students will be affected by this project. These students will be the next generation of doers and thinkers in long term care.

3) Continuing education: A strong continuing education program for long term care is expected to develop as a result of this project.

4) Improved manpower utilization, personnel relations: Training can reduce accidents, carelessness, and costs while improving the quality of care.

5) Staff recruitment and retention.

SUMMARY

The Multuniversity/Multidisciplinary Teaching Nursing Home Project is presented as one of several operational approaches to develop a strong

university-nursing home affiliation. This is a collaborative effort to share resources and activities in order to improve the quality of life of nursing home residents. Representatives from Southwestern Ohio Seniors' Services, Inc., the University of Cincinnati, Miami University, and Xavier University are confident that this project will advance and integrate research, education, and training in long term care. But, only experience and a rigorous evaluation will determine if the multiuniversity/multidisciplinary design will work.

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